



**First Nations Language Keepers Gathering
Workshop
Bernadine Graham**

Title: Reconciliation with Mother Earth

Presenter: Bernadine Graham

Biography: Bernadine Graham is from the Thunderchild First Nation. She has been happily married for the last 34 years with five children and eight grandchildren. She has been in the education field for the past 18 years with positions as a classroom teacher, a Special Ed teacher and administrator. She enjoys her current position with the Treaty Six Education Council as the Treaty, Language and Cultural Consultant. Bernadine felt she was forgetting and losing some of the teachings of her grandparents. With her current position, she feels her job is a re-awakening of her grandparents' teachings that she thought she had forgotten.

Abstract: As First Nations people, we have an “intrinsic, respectful, physically and spiritually dependent, grateful and protective tie to the land.” This tie is not one of ownership, but one of stewardship. As children, we were raised to respect our Mother Earth, to help protect and nurture her. We felt a sense of responsibility for the land and all the animals that inhabit the land with us. The traditional and oral knowledge, languages, and cultural practices are all connected to the land. Today’s educational model for many First Nation Tribal Councils is with a strong focus on language and land-based learning. We need to teach the connection that we have to Mother Earth. In so doing, we teach our children to be respectful, to nurture and to be responsible for Mother Earth along with the protocols to follow when we are out on the land.

Learning Outcomes: Participants will learn:

- Our connection to the land is not one of ownership, but one of stewardship;
- Elders’ input so crucial in our learning process;
- Importance of protocols; and,
- Land-based learning.